

WINDS

The night has girdled on her garb of glooms, The bleak north wind shrieks shrill along the trees...

FERGUS CAMPBELL

When my publishers assigned to me the duty of reporting the Montreal carnival I telegraphed to Fergus Campbell to engage a room for me in the house where he had his lodgings.

Fergus Campbell was a Scot whom I had met in Dunblane, but for ten years he had been engaged on the repertorial staff of a Montreal journal.

Certainly I would never have chosen the chateau for my permanent abode, albeit I was glad to spend a week with Campbell. It was composed of a crumbling mass of gray stone, and was dingy and cheerless.

It was long after midnight when I first entered the chateau. I had visited Dominion square, and seen the ice palace with its turrets, towers and frowning battlements.

Late as it was he was engaged in cooking our supper. He was committing the culinary atrocity of frying a beefsteak, and was smoking a pipe while he worked.

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"Her father was not willing that I should visit her, but I went, and found my lass in the fields by the ruins of the Cathedral of St. Blane, and ever and again in the Bishop's Walk.

"I had need of his cheer for several days, for my work proved arduous. I was expected to send home entertaining accounts of the carnival, and it was virtually suspended.

"I found Campbell in an unusually silent mood. It was black night, and I expected that he was depressed by the bad weather and by my approaching departure.

"I sat up and wondered why this big hearted Scotchman was so removed from the rest of the world. A man of his ability could earn a living anywhere.

"You ought to leave this place, Campbell," I said, "and get into the whirl of an American enterprise. Come with me to the States, where journalism has more to feed upon."

"Montreal is not a bad place. It is a deal cleaner than your town of Pittsburg, and a deal less infernal."

"You know about as much of Pittsburg as you do of the infernal regions," I said, surprised at his remark.

"I looked at him sharply. Was he joking or laboring under some hallucination? His expression was serious—nay, even solemn.

"I am not joking," he answered, seriously. "I could not just about so grave a matter as death. But, Bradford, I died! At 4 o'clock this morning my spirit left my body yonder in that small room, if you will listen respectfully I'll talk of it."

"I took a drink of ale. In spite of myself I could not help seeing that hideous figure in the other room. It appeared now like Campbell's skeleton clad in his gown.

"He did not begin his story at once, but sat wrapped in profound thought, while the wind soughed dismally and his pipe went out unheeded.

"I don't know why I feel like talking of myself to you," he said, "for you are full of gibes and ridicule; but I like you, and, although I have chosen to live a hermit's life, I sometimes grow weary in silence and solitude, and hunger a bit for human sympathy."

"I was born in Dunblane, and began life in humble circumstances. My father died when I was a bairn, and my mother was too poor to give me an easy life, though she gave me a bit of schooling.

"My employer heard me sing, and offered to teach me. I was 25 years old when I was offered my first engagement to sing in public.

"You probably remember the Bishop's Walk in Dunblane. It runs close to the River Allan, and was named for the bishop, Robert Leighton. I used to be very fond of that walk, and one spring morning I found a woman in it who liked it also—as bright and blithe a woman as ever trod upon Scottish heather.

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"I know that perfectly," he answered, earnestly; "but I wasn't alive. Man, I was dead!"

"During my life I had always believed in a dual existence—a bodily and a spiritual one. Now this duality was proven. My spirit left my body and stopped to look at the house it had tenanted.

"My mental faculties remained, but I had no control of my actions. My spirit was mysteriously borne from the room, from the house and from the town.

"I had been regarding Campbell with curiosity as well as suspicion. Sometimes I believed that he was manufacturing his dream or vision or ghost story out of whole cloth.

"I was not up too high," he continued, "to see where I was traveling. I was passing over Albany, for I saw the outline of a building that must have been the capitol.

"I changed my course at length and went westward. I seemed to be crossing over the state of Pennsylvania. Suddenly I thought I knew where I was going, and Bradford, I can give you no idea of the agony I experienced at the discovery.

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"I returned with even greater swiftness, and by the same long route by the coast, as I had reached Montreal before light had fairly broken, and entered the chateau unimpeded by windows and doors.

"I sat up and lighted my lamp. I was still cold and wet with clammy perspiration. The clock was striking 7, and I remembered that I had been to Pittsburg and back by an unnecessarily long route in exactly three hours.

"You certainly made remarkably quick time," I commented. "I'd say you'd been suffering from delirium tremens if I was not aware of your temperate habits. You had the nightmare, Campbell."

"Read it," he said, eagerly. "It came this evening, and it proves that I saw Morrison die."

"The dispatch was from a relative of Campbell's in Pittsburg. These were its contents: 'Morrison killed himself this morning by jumping from his window. He has been mad for years.'"

"We looked at each other in silence. 'Yes, I said at last, 'you have either been telling a stupendous lie or this is a remarkable coincidence.'"

"It's no lie," he answered, solemnly. "Bradford, it's as true as gospel."

"Two years passed before I saw Campbell again. He came down the corridor of the Windsor hotel, and I could not fail to notice that his appearance had greatly improved. He had gained considerable avoirdupois, and was dressed in excellent taste.

"You are Fergus Campbell," I said, and offered my hand. He grasped it cordially. "I was Fergus Campbell once," he said; "but—with an irresistible and contagious grin—they call me Signor Campbellini now!"

"Then you have finished your studies?" "Yes," he answered, "I am a full fledged opera singer, and I could not longed to ask him if he was married, but feared the subject might be a painful one.

"Come to my rooms," he said, as if he knew what was in my mind, "and see my wife and bairn. I am married to Maile Morrison. Bradford. After her father's violent death she went back to Dunblane and I followed her. I met her in the Bishop's Walk and we agreed that we would never be separated again.

"The Loco Weed in Oregon. In a recent issue of The Scientific American, under heading of 'Natural History Notes,' you speak of the 'loco' or 'crazy weed' of Texas and that its repulsive power of producing insanity and death has been proved unaccounted.

"It is impossible to conceive of a more thorough system than that on which the German army is based. In every village there is a certain number of reserves deposited in the city hall which is sufficient to keep all the soldiers in the village in food for thirty days after the declaration of war.

"This condition of things exists in every corner of the empire. The instant the emperor declares war the entire telegraphic and railroad service is turned over to the state; the shoemaker in the village dons his uniform, jumps on his neighbor's horse, reports at the barracks, the bag of money is put in the gun carriage, and within a few hours the entire force of the village, town or city is standing in the ranks for active service.

"A New and Valuable Drug. According to Cassell's Magazine a new drug of great value has recently appeared in the market. It consists of powder jamba seeds—the seeds of a plant, Strygium jamba-seed or Eugenia jamba-seed, found in various parts of India, the Mauritius, Ceylon and the United States of Colombia. It has been well tested by the medical faculty in England, Germany and the United States, and is said to be a promising remedy in all cases of diabetes.

"Not Always a Virtue. With all that is justly said about the virtue of contentment, there is one species of it that lies like a worm at the core of all human progress. It is that which renders a man satisfied with his own achievements, content to remain where he is in the different spheres of activity or thought or usefulness, instead of ascending into others which are open to him and for which he may be fitted.

"Boys (out late)—There, Brown, is your house; (you think you can get in by yourself. Brown—Yeah, boys, (goes) but the baby's crying. This (hic) no time to go (hic) home. Let's go on! have one more. —New York Sun.

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